

WHAT'S

keeping staff informed & current

Finding fulfillment through career and community involvement

While searching for work with the County of Orange, Jose Alfaro knew that he wanted to do something that would allow him to be able to give back to his community. Today, as a Social Worker II for the Public Health Adolescent Family Life Program (AFLP), Jose has achieved his goal and is earning positive recognition for his service to both the program and the clients he serves.

It all began when Jose served an internship with the County's ManPower Commission 18 years ago. There, he served as an advisor to youth regarding youth employment programs. From this internship, Jose first became interested in educating and providing outreach to youth. Once his internship ended, Jose then moved to CalWorks with the Children and Family Services Program at the Social Services Agency, where he stayed for 13 years. His joy of being able to provide service to children, teens and families quickly paved the way for his current position with AFLP, where he has been for the past 5 years.

As a Social Worker II, Jose works one-on-one with clients to provide proactive education, outreach, crisis intervention, case management and advocacy to pregnant and parenting teens. His current position allows him to go out into the community to visit clients in their homes, schools and work sites where he meets with his clients on a monthly basis. Being able to see progress in teens through his services gives Jose a sense of fulfillment. "My ability to assist and educate the teens about parenting, proper nutrition, goal setting and being in school or receiving training is something that I enjoy very much," said Jose. "I especially enjoy the fact that we work with the teens and not for them." He currently handles about 40 cases, with a diverse clientele that mostly includes teens of Hispanic and Caucasian descent.

The AFLP program, part of Maternal Child Health (MCH) is a voluntary pro-

gram for eligible individuals. Many participants are referred to the program by Public Health nurses and doctors. AFLP, also known as UpBeat, links teens with case managers who are able to assist them with health services, schooling, childcare and counseling, just to name a few. AFLP's successes include decreasing the rate of low birth-weight infants, reducing repeat unplanned pregnancies and increasing both school enrollment and high school graduations.

Through his work, Jose is able to see an impact on the lives of individuals. "My most memorable moment while working at AFLP was when I was able to gain the trust of a 16 year old teen client with two children. She wasn't attending school or working, but through

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Overwhelming response to education survey received

The majority of HCA employees will take advantage of the County's new Educational and Professional Reimbursement program this year, according to the Agency's recent Continuing Education and Training Survey.

Almost 60% of Agency staff said they would use the reimbursement program to further their education and training, and more than 95% of employees said they were familiar with the program, which offers up to \$2,000 per year for qualified expenditures. The survey also found that two-thirds of employees would be interested in college courses offered at HCA sites or other convenient locations.

The survey demonstrated the interest of HCA staff in furthering their education and continuing their professional development. In addition to computer skills, respondents expressed an interest in improving their communication, clinical and management skills. About 75% reported participating in HCA-provided continuing education or training programs in the past year.

Results of the survey will be used to plan future HCA education and training efforts, including the development of relationships with local universities and colleges providing programs that relate to the Health Care Agency's mission and responsibilities.

National study arrives in Orange County

From the outside, it looks like four semi-truck sized trailers sitting side by side. However, from the inside, Orange County residents are getting a much different view of the nation's most comprehensive study on the health and nutritional status of Americans.

Over 500 Orange County residents have been invited to participate in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) through a comprehensive screening that lasts over 3 hours. The survey is perhaps the most important way of determining the prevalence of major diseases and risk factors for disease among the U.S. population and is a program of the National Center for Health Statistics.

The four trailers parked behind a Garden Grove hotel contain specialized rooms to gather information on each participant's vision, hearing, height, weight and other measures of health status. From the information collected nationwide, experts are able to create things like the growth charts used nationally by pediatricians to evaluate a child's development. The study will also be used to provide the first national data on tuberculosis. Participants are compensated for their time, in addition to receiving a free health exam that would cost thousands of dollars.

HCA representatives joined other local health care providers in touring the NHANES vans during a January 25th Open House. The information gathered by the survey will be used in many HCA programs, including Nutrition Services. For example, the survey has documented the increasing trend toward obesity among Americans, generating calls for healthier diets and increased exercise.



(Above) Maridet Ibanez of HCA Nutrition Services was among Agency representatives who toured the NHANES mobile units on January 25th. Data collected in Orange County as a part of the nationwide survey will help to determine national health standards for decades to come and provide a comprehensive picture of the health of Americans.

Cultural Competency program in the spotlight



Behavioral Health's Cultural Competency program presented the December 2001 "Spotlight on Excellence" award to Eva Solario of the Agency's County Islands Program. Eva began her career with Alcohol and Drug Services (ADAS) three years ago at the Westminster Clinic and now serves as a Program Supervisor. Also presented was a Certificate of Congratulations from Board of Supervisors Chair Cynthia P. Coad, who serves as a member of the county's Mental Health Board. Joining Ms. Solario for the presentation were Rafael Canul and Veronica Kelly of the Cultural Competency program and Brett O'Brien of ADAS.



The January 2002 recipient of the "Spotlight on Excellence" award is Mary Morris of Behavioral Health Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services. Mary's more than 18-year career with the Health Care Agency started as a mental health specialist and she is now serving as a Service Chief II. Participating in the recognition were Mary's supervisor, Brett O'Brien, MFT, and Cultural Competency program representatives Veronica Kelley and Rafael Canul. Mary also received a Certificate of Congratulations from Board of Supervisors Chair Cynthia P. Coad.

Student artwork wins anti-tobacco contest awards

In an effort to increase anti-tobacco awareness among Orange County youth, the "Tune Out Tobacco" Project holds an annual contest to showcase media-related materials and artwork produced by children. Contest categories include public service announcements, script writing and billboard and cartoon design. Pictured below is artwork by Brent Wallace from Laurel High School in Los Alamitos, the first place winner in the cartoon category. The lucky winners in each category will have their award-winning creation displayed either on a billboard or in a newsletter in their community. The contest attracts more than 100 entrants each year with Orange County youth coordinators officiating as judges.

Other winners in the cartoon category included:

- Elizabeth Torres, McFadden Intermediate School, Santa Ana
- Emely Ponce, McFadden Intermediate School, Santa Ana
- Dalila Toledo, McFadden Intermediate School, Santa Ana
- Orlando Casco, Laurel High School, Los Alamitos
- Nicole Williams, Laurel High School, Los Alamitos
- Nicole Ozuna, McFadden Intermediate School, Santa Ana

The "Tune Out Tobacco" Project helps Orange County youth counter the positive portrayal of tobacco in movies, television, billboards, magazines and window advertisements. The project also gives youth the opportunity to learn effective ways to present their ideas to community policy makers and members of the entertainment and advertising industry. For more information about the "Tune Out Tobacco" Project or if you are interested in becoming a judge for the next contest, please call the Tobacco Use Prevention Program at (714) 541-1444.



Gold Star

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positive outreach and advocacy, I was proud to see that she took the first step and enrolled herself in a teen pregnancy school," Jose commented. "She now expresses interest in attending college, is learning how to drive and also participates in soccer." Through their participation in the AFLP program, many of Jose's clients have developed strong bonds with him and have managed to stay in touch and keep him updated on their progress.

Jose attended Santa Ana College where he studied social work and earned an Associate Degree in Liberal Arts. He also attended California State University Long Beach. In his spare time, Jose al-

ways seems to find himself working and giving back to the community. He and his wife enjoy working with their church by providing positive outreach and assistance to homeless individuals and teenagers. While at work, Jose also contributes to United Way by helping to promote awareness and raise funds for community based organizations.

Ten years from now, Jose says he still sees himself working with the County and the community. It has been his passion to provide assistance to all who can benefit from what he has learned at school and through his experience as a Social Worker. Jose would also like to devote more time to his second love, writing poetry and short stories.

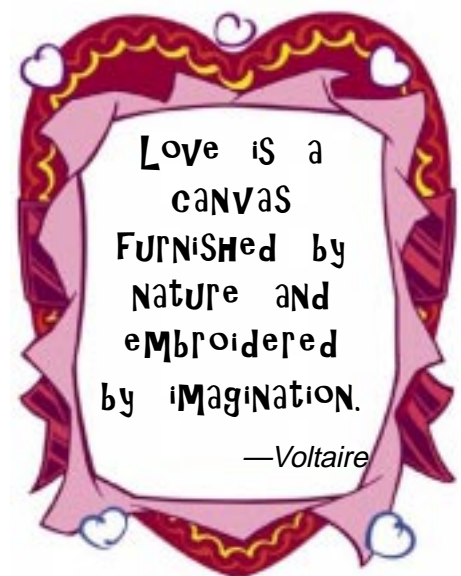
Retirement seminars planned

There's still time to register for one of the financial workshops being offered in March by the Orange County Employees Retirement System (OCERS).

The free seminars for County of Orange employees will be held at the OCERS office, located at 2223 Wellington Avenue in Santa Ana (at the northwest corner of Wellington Avenue and Tustin Avenue). The Financial Strategy Seminar is a three-session workshop geared for employees anticipating retirement in the next three to ten years. The multi-session workshop will begin March 6th and will continue on consecutive Wednesday nights (March 13 & 20) from 6-9:30 p.m.

The short-term Pre-Retirement Seminars are geared for those planning on retirement within the next three years. These are one-session workshops to be held on Wednesdays from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. The sessions are scheduled for February 20, March 6 and March 20.

Registration is required to attend either the three-session Financial Strategy Seminar or the one-session Pre-Retirement Seminar. To register, call Susan Spietz at (714) 558-6200, ext. 4834.



WE'RE ON-LINE!

You can check out the latest issues of the Health Care Agency's newsletters by using this URL:

<http://www.oc.ca.gov/hca/newslett.htm>

We will keep current issues on line for a year. Let us know how you like the convenience!

Bioterrorism education effort continues

While the volume of public inquiries has decreased, many HCA programs and services continue their efforts to educate the public about the potential for additional acts of bioterrorism and to prepare the Agency for the response needed to such an incident.

More than one million copies of the brochure "Terrorism: A Guide to Domestic Preparedness" have been prepared by HCA in cooperation with the Orange County Sheriff's Department, Fire Authority, District Attorney's office and the FBI. The brochure, which is available in English, Spanish and Vietnamese, is being distributed through school districts, city and county government offices and at public events, such as the well attended Tet Festival in Garden Grove.

Preparedness efforts now dominate the bioterrorism related activity for many HCA services. Representatives of Public Health's Epidemiology staff, led by Dr. Hildy Meyers, continue to provide essential information to community health care providers, including presentations to hospital medical staff members who would be counted on to accurately diagnose and report illness caused by bioterrorism.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel continue to draft portions of Orange County's Metropolitan Medical Response System plan that would guide the mobilization of EMS organizations and hospitals in the event of a local bioterrorism event. Another important activity for Emergency Medical Services is updating the HCA Disaster Plan. EMS



(Above) Mark Sudweeks of HCA's Office of Quality Management fills another order for the Agency-completed terrorism preparedness brochure. Many HCA programs and services continue their efforts to educate professionals and the public about terrorism risks.

staff are also working directly with hospitals to ensure they have the protective equipment and other resources needed to care for potential victims of bioterrorism. HCA Environmental Health specialists are also involved in this effort, providing their expertise and knowledge about hazardous materials and emergency response procedures.

New places, new faces

HCA's Compliance program entered 2002 in high gear, nearing completion of their massive Compliance training effort while moving to a new location.

To date, over 3,000 people have participated in Compliance training, including HCA employees, contract employees and representatives of HCA's contractors. Make-up sessions took place in early January, and additional sessions have been planned for February.

Through all of this, Compliance program staff were packing for an important move to new offices at 405 W. 5th Street, Suite 776, Santa Ana. The move allows Compliance office staff to be located in a single area, rather than in individual, widely separated offices.

Additions have also been announced to the Compliance office staff. Joining the Compliance office as an Assistant Compliance Officer is John Van Sky, Ph.D., who has been assigned to compliance investigations. Dr. Van Sky was previously with Behavioral Health's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services. Also a part of the HCA Compliance team is Staff Assistant Jody Barrera, who moves over from HCA Purchasing Services. Chief Compliance Officer David Riley and Assistant Compliance Officer Ruth Zamora complete the Compliance program staff.

Detailed information on the Compliance Program is available on the HCA Intranet. If you don't already have the HCA Intranet as your home page, or if you don't have a link to the Intranet, type <http://balsam/intranet/> in your Internet browser address line.

MARCH HEALTH OBSERVANCES

National Kidney Month

National Nutrition Month

Mental Retardation Awareness Month

Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Awareness Month

Workplace Eye Health and Safety Month

Save Your Vision Week March 3-9

National School Breakfast Week March 4-8

Pulmonary Rehabilitation Week March 10-16

National Inhalants Awareness Week March 17-23

National Poison Prevention Week March 17-23

World Tuberculosis Day March 24

American Diabetes Alert March 27

health care agency
WHAT'S UP
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